



DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL'S 3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (NOVEMBER 2024 – OCTOBER 2027)

This 3-year Strategic Plan sets out an overarching vision, underpinned by a set of principles, which guide the work of Downton Parish Council. In this Strategic Plan, fully costed projects and targets inform the annual budget and Precept for each financial year during the term of the Plan.

This Plan was approved at a meeting of full council held on 12th August 2024

VISION STATEMENT

Downton Parish Council (the Council) offer community leadership with the aim of developing Downton, Charlton All Saints, and Standlynch into a vibrant community; a place where people want to live, visit, and do business in.

We, the Council, will achieve this by: -

- Improving the health and wellbeing of our residents
- Working with local groups to enhance the local environment:
 - street scene
 - public green spaces
 - footpaths
 - climate
 - rivers
 - overall image of Downton, Charlton All Saints, and Standlynch
 - road safety
- Respecting and preserving our heritage
- Working with local businesses and groups to encourage commercial prosperity



ABOUT DOWNTON, CHARLTON ALL SAINTS, AND STANDLYNCH

Demography

- 3,300 people at last Census (2021) (an increase from 3,073 in 2011)
- Of which 2,632 are registered on the electoral role
- 813 are over 65 – with 626 being over 70
- There are approximately 600 children
- Slightly fewer males than females
- 2,770 were born in the UK and 2,877 describe themselves as 'white'.
- 1,176 state that they have 'no religion'

Landscape

- River Avon running North/South which created the wide flat valley within which the Parish is situated
- Includes the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Cranborne Chase
- Mostly fields and small woodlands outside the small built-up areas
- Part of the floodplain is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Surrounded by downland – best views are from Barford Lane, the Avon Valley footpath and Wick Lane
- Central area of Downton designated as a Conservation Area in 1973, containing over 85 listed buildings

Description

The area includes significantly different characteristics depending on location.

Standlynch: The small hamlet includes Standlynch Farm, Trafalgar House, and a small number of houses.

Downton Village: there is a traveller site at Lode Hill, Moot Lane, and several small side roads of housing built in the second half of the last century including a complex for older people. The Borough and parts of the A338 with several thatched cottages and older buildings, relatively new housing at West Wick, Charlotte Place, and the Charles Church development, other areas of housing built in the second half of the last century at Greenacres and off Marie Avenue.

Charlton-All-Saints: along the A338 where most of the housing is older style.

Facilities

- over 30 clubs and societies
- three pubs
- three churches
- a nursery, a preschool, a primary school and a secondary school
- a Business Park (although most of the employees live outside the Parish)
- a public library
- a GP surgery
- a dentist
- a Coop and several small shops
- a Leisure Centre and Sports Club

POWERS TO PROVIDE AND FUND SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The Council has the discretion to exercise a range of statutory powers for the provision and support of certain services and facilities which benefit residents, as driven by the wishes of residents.

The Council sets its budget to fund the provision and support of these services for the following financial year in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations adopted on 08 April 2024.

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners Guide (JPAG) (March 2024 edition) advises:

"5.31 As with any financial entity, it is essential that authorities have sufficient reserves (General and Earmarked) to finance both their day-to-day operations and future plans."

In this respect, the Council has adopted a General and Earmarked Reserves Policy.

Consideration of the annual budget plus adequacy of reserves inform the Precept (a levy on residents incorporated into Wiltshire Council's tax bill) for the following financial year. Referendum principles do not apply for a local precepting authority.

The Council is subject to The Local Government Transparency Code 2015, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice 2015.

PRINCIPLES ON HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR VISION

1. Provide value for money in the delivery of Council services and facilities whilst supporting the local economy and local organisations.

Grant applications

- Predefined grant projects
- Active travel grants
- BWSCA aid grant development
- Historic England
- Wiltshire Towns visitor economy
- Area Board grants
- Sports bodies
- Men's shed grant

Public Facilities management

- Review of all assets
- Maintenance programme
- Cemetery development
- Toilets development

2. Working with local groups to enhance the local environment

Street scene, public green spaces, footpaths, climate, rivers, road safety, and overall image of Downton, Charlton All Saints, and Standlynch

- Regular cleaning and maintenance
- Make Downton 'blooming great' again
- New grounds maintenance contracts
- New signage
- SID enforcement
- 20 is plenty

Environmental/Ecological

- SSSI/biodiversity
- Develop a strategy
- Climate action/audit
- Ecological development
- Water/river pollution

Partnership working

- Working methodology
- Open to opportunities
- Building a volunteer network
- Working with local schools
- Facilitate intergenerational projects
- Local groups such as Downton Society, Green Network

3. Working with local businesses and groups to encourage commercial prosperity

Wiltshire Towns Programme

Collaboration with business

- Working together to financially benefit people and businesses
- Sponsorship opportunities

4. Respecting and preserving our heritage

Neighbourhood Plan

Planning and Infrastructure

- Build better relationships with housing companies
- Optimise our S106 monies
- Retaining the historical integrity
- Situated in a Conservation Area

5. Encourage participation in local matters

Communication

- The Council's 'brand voice' i.e. the tone, style, and messaging to nurture connection with target audience – professional, sincere, friendly, approachable, authoritative, innovative.
- Wider communication channels
- New website
- QR codes

A Council that listens

- Public engagement and consultation on the next Council project (shortlist of three with fully funded plan selected by the Council)

6. Delivery through our people

Our Members: Councils need active, interested, and committed people to become Councillors and get involved in their work.

Our employed Officers and Staff: need the right skills, experience, and behaviours aligned to the Council's brand voice to make for a highly effective workforce.

Our Volunteers: will offer specialist knowledge, local knowledge, enthusiasm, and expertise.

TARGETS

1. Provide value for money
 2. Working with local groups
 3. Working with local businesses
 4. Respecting and preserving our heritage
 5. Encourage participation
 6. Delivery through our people
- } Principles summary

SHORT-TERM (6 MONTHS)

| TARGET | PRINCIPLE SUPPORTED | OWNER | DELIVERY DATE | BUDGET |
|---|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Hold an early evening open meeting (with refreshments) to engage a volunteer force (possible with BWSCA) | 1, 6, | PC/ Admin Officer (AO) | Dec 2024 | Identify in mid-year review |
| Hold a partners meeting to identify the priorities of our partners and how these could work together (DS, Green Network, Schools, businesses) | 2, 3, 6, | PC/AO | Feb 2025 | Identify in mid-year review |
| Complete stage 2 of cemetery refurb project | 4 | MR/GW | Dec 2024 | Allocated budget |
| Launch redesigned website | 5 | Clerk/DM/AN | Dec 2024 | Allocated budget |
| Identify a 'brand' statement for use with our logo on all comms, including the development of Instagram and FB accounts | 5 | PC/Strategy Planning Grp | Sept 2024 | N/A |
| Engage with Persimmon (and others) to negotiate housing options and additional community funds | 1 | PC | Dec 2024 | N/A |
| Agree on lease approach for BWSCA | 5, 6 | BWSCA WGroup/PC | Oct 2024 | N/A |

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|--|---------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Undertake an asset review and agree priorities for maintenance actions where required | 6 | AO | Dec 2024 | N/A |
| Complete the NP review | 4 | AN/PC | | N/A |
| Complete tree planting project together with bulb and wildflower planting working with relevant community involvement | 6 | AO | Nov 2024 | Grant allocation |
| Develop a 'serenity' space in the Memorial Gardens working with local organisations (DS etc) | 2,4,5,6 | Chair/AO | March 2025 | Funds from local groups |
| Work with Paul Leo to maximise the benefits of the Wilts Town Programme. | 1,3,4 | PC/AN | End of programme | WC towns funding |
| Investigate river sustainability and flood resilience by maximising gulley clearing, working with EA, and riparian owners. | 4, 6 | Flood Committee/AO | Ongoing | External funding |
| Formalise a Strategy oversight group. | 6. | PC | Oct 2024 | N/A |

MID-TERM (1 YEAR)

| TARGET | PRINCIPLE SUPPORTED | OWNER | DELIVERY DATE | BUDGET |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|---|
| Hold a public consultation to register interest and prioritisation of strategy projects | 5 | PC/AO | March 2025 | Identify in mid-year budget |
| Identify whether there is interest in greater sports development, identifying relevant facilities, and potential funding available. | 2, 5 | Amenities Committee | March 2025 | N/A |
| Commission a sustainability audit of Council assets | 4 | PC | April 2025 | Identify in mid-year budget |
| Disaggregate grounds maintenance contracts and commission new providers where possible | 1 | PC/Clerk | April 2025 | Budget allocation or identify in 25/26 budget |
| Complete BWSCA lease | 2, 6 | PC via BWSCA WGroup | Sept 2025 | Budget allocation |
| Identify interest in a 'Man Shed' project to support volunteer workforce | 6 | Amenities Committee | Sept 2025 | Grant funding |
| Maintain a watching brief over Wessex Water's £10m project and influence where appropriate and possible. | 1,3,4 | PC | Oct 2025 | N/A |
| Work on behalf of residents to ask for a patient liaison meeting to hear and understand the problems residents are experiencing. | 3, 5 | Chair/AO | Nov 2024 | N/A |

LONGER-TERM (2-3 YEARS)

| TARGET | PRINCIPLE SUPPORTED | OWNER | DELIVERY DATE | BUDGET |
|--|---------------------|--|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Public toilets refurb if S106 funds become available | 6 | PC | Oct 2027 | Developer funding |
| Leisure centre refurb if development funds available/or identify viability plan | 2,3,5,6 | PC/BWSCA | Oct 2027 and onwards | Developer funding |
| Implement sports team facilities if interest exists and grant funding has been obtained. | 2,5 | Amenities Committee/local sports teams | Oct 2027 | Grant and locally raised funds |
| If development funding available, push for increased surgery facilities | 3 | PC | As available | Developer funding |

PLAN REVIEW

Review frequency: six-monthly

By whom: Strategy Planning Group (who operate under a Terms of Reference).

Reporting mechanism back to full council: from Strategy Planning Group through Agenda six-monthly